Skills NOVA SCOTIA

Skills Nova Scotia
Annual Progress Report 2002–2003

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Annual Progress Report 2002–2003

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Message from the Premier

Office of
the Premier

I am pleased to provide you with the progress report on the provincial skills agenda following the release of the *Skills Nova Scotia Framework and 2002–2003 Action Plan*.

The key to the success of Skills Nova Scotia is partnerships, and our partners across business, labour, industry, education and training, and communities are committed to working together to bridge the skills gap.

Through the Skills Nova Scotia framework, we have begun to identify and address skills gaps through co-ordinated activities with our partners. These activities create opportunities for Nova Scotians to upgrade their education and training to be successful in the workforce, as well as preparing Nova Scotia's businesses to compete globally.

More than 50,000 Nova Scotians have been impacted by the provincial skills initiative in the last year and this number will continue to grow. We have strengthened our economy and created opportunities for our people and our businesses to prosper.

Nova Scotia has a stronger workforce and a brighter future.

John Hamm

John F. Hamm
Premier of Nova Scotia

Message from the Minister of Education

Office of
the Minister
of Education

I am pleased to provide you with the *Skills Nova Scotia Annual Progress Report 2002–2003* to highlight the tremendous work we have been able to achieve through our partnerships with business, labour, industry, education and training providers, and communities. The progress report is a compilation of efforts across government to ensure a successful and prosperous future for Nova Scotians.

As the lead department on the provincial skills agenda, we are working to provide excellence in education and training for all Nova Scotians, for their personal fulfilment, and for a productive, prosperous society. As the Co-chair for the Forum of Labour Market Ministers this year, I am prepared to advance the skills agenda with our partners provincially and nationally.

There have been many skills activities through 2002–Spring 2003, to train and educate more of Nova Scotia's youth and adults. Some of the highlights include 700,000 new books for students in primary through grade seven to help young Nova Scotians develop their reading skills and a lifelong love of learning. As well, more than 400 Nova Scotians returned to learning and acquired their Nova Scotia High School Graduation Diploma for Adults.

This year, the government announced a $123 million investment in Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC). This means thousands of students across the province will take new and expanded programs in state of the art facilities at NSCC. Skilled workers are the key to Nova Scotia's prosperity, and NSCC plays a critical role in preparing a job-ready workforce.

The government has also invested an additional $1.5 million in the provincial skills agenda to expand learning opportunities for Nova Scotians in rural areas and provide alternative services for delivery and more programs. The investment will also significantly increase our ability to partner with business, labour, and industry to address the skills and learning needs of the workforce that will positively impact our competitiveness and productivity.

We are pleased with the many successes to date, but appreciate that there is more work to do. We are committed to working with our partners to ensure that skills development opportunities exist for the labour market of today and tomorrow.

Angus MacIsaac

Angus MacIsaac
Minister of Education

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Introduction

In 2002, the Province of Nova Scotia released the *Skills Nova Scotia Framework and 2002–2003 Action Plan*, which outlined goals and objectives designed to prepare Nova Scotia's workforce to meet the challenges of today and the promise of tomorrow. The framework identifies a number of opportunities such as a growing economy and emerging industries that must be balanced with the challenges of an aging workforce, rapid technological change, and the continuing globalization of the economy. The key to success will be the development of innovative and timely strategies to balance the opportunities with the challenges and grow a healthy, vibrant Nova Scotia.

The Skills Nova Scotia framework lays the foundation for the skills, supports, and systems required to respond to both the short- and long-term skill development needs of the labour market.

The annual progress report clearly shows that successful partnerships underpin all of our good work. The initiatives outlined in this document point to co-operation among businesses, labour, communities, education and training providers, and government as the driving force in the creation of a skilled and knowledgeable workforce.

Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Meet the skill needs of Nova Scotia's labour market

Objectives

1. Research, develop, and distribute high-quality labour market information
2. Co-ordinate targeted initiatives that satisfy emerging skill needs
3. Work to enhance and improve the apprenticeship system in Nova Scotia
4. Improve mobility of skilled workers within Canada
5. Improve Nova Scotia's competitive edge in attracting and retaining highly skilled international workers
6. Design and implement labour policy to promote safe and healthy work environments, fair employment standards, and stable labour-management relations
7. Improve opportunities for youth to develop the leadership skills required for successful labour market participation

Goal 2: Provide better labour market access and supports to Nova Scotians

Objectives

1. Provide career- and employment-related services to Nova Scotians to help them develop their skills and find sustainable jobs
2. Assist low-income Nova Scotians, including income assistance recipients, to access education and training
3. Promote equity, fairness, and diversity throughout labour market programs and services offered in Nova Scotia
4. Develop and implement prior-learning assessment and recognition processes and tools

Goal 3: Strengthen Nova Scotia's system of lifelong learning opportunities

Objectives

1. Increase the opportunities for Nova Scotia's children to develop a curiosity for and ability to learn before entering Nova Scotia's education system
2. Improve the core skills of children in Nova Scotia's education system
3. Expand co-operative and work experience opportunities for students in Nova Scotia's secondary education system
4. Increase the opportunities for Nova Scotians to access adult basic education
5. Make education and training more relevant to the emerging skill needs of the learners and employers
6. Increase the post-secondary education and training system's capacity to respond to emerging labour market needs
7. Promote lifelong learning through the development of a learning culture

Structuring for Success

The Skills Nova Scotia framework identified a number of key components to support effective planning, communications, and implementation. These include the following:

Skills and Learning Branch

The branch was formed in September of 2002, and it consists of the Adult Education Division, Apprenticeship Training and Skill Development Division, Labour Market Partnerships Division, Labour Market Development Secretariat, and Youth Services Division. The role of the branch in relation to Skills Nova Scotia is to provide co-ordination and support to the Skills Nova Scotia operational structure.

Deputy Ministers' Committee on Skills

The Committee on Skills consists of the deputy ministers from Community Services, Economic Development, Education, Energy, and Environment and Labour. Deputy ministers from other departments participate on an as-needed basis. The committee is chaired by the Deputy Minister of Education, and its role is to co-ordinate skills activities across government and provide leadership by setting the government's skills agenda.

Partners' Advisory Council on Workforce Skills (PAC)

The role of the PAC is to provide advice and guidance on current skill development and labour market issues, and future trends. The PAC will consist of members appointed by the Minister of Education who have experience and expertise in social and economic factors related to the labour market. The call for nominations to the PAC went out in February of 2003, and it was formed in June 2003.

Partners' Forum on Workforce Skills (The Forum)

The forum consists of members from a range of labour market boards and agencies, industry associations, sector councils, education providers, labour organizations, and non-governmental organizations involved with labour market and skill development issues. The forum's role is to provide the PAC with relevant and timely labour market information, areas of expertise, and partnership opportunities for initiatives.

Labour Force Planning Committee

The planning committee was formed in June 2002, and it consists of representatives from all the provincial government departments and agencies involved with labour market and skill development issues. The planning committee's role is to advance the priorities set by the Deputy Ministers' Committee on Skills and to develop annual action plans and reports.

Working Together

In the *Skills Nova Scotia Framework and 2002–2003 Action Plan*, the province indicated a willingness to work with the federal government to achieve our common priorities. Two initiatives have been launched to advance this goal: the Canada/Nova Scotia Skills and Learning Framework (CNSSLF) and the Canada/Nova Scotia Innovations Team. In both of these forums, provincial and federal departments work together to ensure that Nova Scotia has the environment and workforce necessary for innovation and growth.

The priorities under the Canada/Nova Scotia Skills and Learning Framework are:

- Apprenticeship, Learning, and Earning
- Employability, Career Development, and Employment Counselling
- Immigration
- Labour Market Information

The Canada-Nova Scotia Protocol on Youth Employment will also be implemented under the CNSSLF.

The priorities under the Canada/Nova Scotia Innovations Team are:

- Understanding Innovation
- Innovation Environment
- Knowledge Performance (Infrastructure)
- Strengthening Communication
- Skills–Highly Qualified People

Annual Progress Report

Goal 1: Meet the skill needs of Nova Scotia's Labour Market

Objective 1

Research, develop, and distribute high quality labour market information

I liked that it showed me what to look for, it showed me all kinds of new jobs, it also gave me some idea on what I want to do.

Grade 9 student on *Career Options*

I think that it was a good book —when someone is thinking about quitting school they just need to read pg's 4–8 then they'll have second thoughts.

Grade 9 student on *Career Options*

Activities	Achievements to Date
• co-ordinating our approach to the collection, analysis, and dissemination of labour market information to address the labour market information needs of individuals, business and labour, education and training institutions, and governments	The Nova Scotia Federal–Provincial Labour Market Information Committee has been established. It has completed a project to assess labour market information needs in Nova Scotia and drafted a strategic policy framework document that sets out strategic directions and supporting initiatives. A new edition of *Career Options: An Occupational Handbook for Nova Scotians* has been published and placed on the Web. *Career Options: A Guide to Nova Scotia's Changing Labour Market* was distributed to grade 9 students in May 2003.
• understanding the human and resource planning needs of Nova Scotia's health care system by partnering with the Health Care Human Resource Sector Council and the federal government	Occupational profiles for approximately 30 health-care professions which detail demographic information, education and training requirements, and the human resource issues for each occupation, will be complete in late spring.
• updating and releasing the *2003 Nova Scotia Business Climate Index*, a key measure that shows Nova Scotia's business climate and compares it to other jurisdictions in Canada	The *Nova Scotia Business Climate Index* is being updated following extensive consultation and feedback from stakeholders.
• research labour market issues and trends to support government labour market policy initiatives and the development of labour market programs and services for Nova Scotians	Labour market, industrial, and occupational projections for Nova Scotia have been developed in partnership with Human Resources Development Canada/ Nova Scotia. These are based on Canadian Occupational Projection System (COPS) data.

	Activities	Achievements to Date
	• identify new opportunities for women in emerging trades/ technology occupations, in conjunction with stakeholders such as the Construction Sector Council and Women in Trades and Technology, to develop a planning process for a co-ordinated strategy for the recruitment and retention of women in these occupations and trades	An environmental scan to identify program gaps and opportunities is being conducted in collaboration with stakeholders. A co-ordinated strategy for recruitment and retention of women in trades and technology occupations is being developed in partnership with stakeholders.
Objective 2 **Co-ordinate targeted initiatives that satisfy emerging skills needs**	**Activities**	**Achievements to Date**
	• addressing the short- and long-term human resource issues in the construction industry through the Construction Trades Skills Initiative, which will ensure that Nova Scotia has the skilled workers required in the construction trades to meet the industry's current and future needs	Under this construction initiative, the Atlantic Home Building and Renovation Sector Council has undertaken a study to determine the balance between demand and supply for workers in designated occupations in the residential construction industry. The analysis will break occupations down by skill type and level, training and accreditations, and other attributes demanded by employers.
After 48 years of continuous employment, I take great pride in the opportunities I have gained through the Older Worker Pilot Project Initiative. I am especially proud of the computer and GED certificates that are now hanging on my wall. **R. (Dick) Farah**	• targeting older workers (aged 55–64) through the Older Worker Pilot Project Initiative, in partnership with the federal government, which is designed to reintegrate displaced older workers into sustainable employment or maintain employment of older workers threatened with displacement	Five older worker pilot projects were established across the province. Approximately 500 older workers have participated in a range of programs and services offered by these pilot projects. Over 450 employers have been contacted and provided with information on the initiative, as well as the benefits of hiring older workers.

Activities	Achievements to Date
• implementing Nova Scotia's Nursing Strategy, which includes initiatives to support ongoing education needs for practising nurses	Fifty fourth-year nursing students each received $4,000 bursaries in exchange for agreeing to work in Nova Scotia for one year after graduation. This year to date, 113 nurses relocated to Nova Scotia through relocation allowances of up to $5,000 through the Nursing Strategy. Seventy nurses took advantage of the re-entry program through the Nursing Strategy.
• developing and implementing strategies for the culture sector, focussing on developing export sales opportunities for cultural products in design, new media, music and sound recording, production crafts, and publishing	The following activities have been taken in support of this activity: – provided investment support for skills development workshops in music, craft, and cultural activities – offered skills development and enhancement courses through the Nova Scotia Centre for Craft and Design – provided funding to youth organizations involved in skills development, e.g., Halifax Dance Young Company and Nova Scotia Youth Orchestra – through the Anchor Organizations Program, provided funding to the Gaelic College and the Cultural Federations of Nova Scotia, which offer training and support services to visual artists, writers, and actors among others

Activities	Achievements to Date
• providing customized training for adult learners through programs such as the Nova Scotia Agricultural College Millbrook Aquaculture and Horticulture Program	Nine of 15 Millbrook First Nations students received their certificate of completion of a customized 32 week aquaculture and horticulture training program in December 2002. The Nova Scotia Agricultural College Centre for Continuing and Distance Education, with assistance from the Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada, offered a series of four courses on organic agriculture for Internet delivery. Enrolment in the seven distance education courses in 2002–2003 totaled 138 students.
• developing entrepreneurial skills in partnership with the federal government and community organizations	The province worked with Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency to launch the Entrepreneurship and Business Skills Partnership in the fall of 2002 and created an Open For Business office at Eskasoni to serve the five bands on Cape Breton in partnership with Membertou, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, and the Centre for Entrepreneurship Education and Development.
• identifying labour demands and training needs to ensure that Nova Scotians have the skills required to participate in the offshore energy sector as part of the benefits plans negotiated with industry partners	Currently, the province is participating in a national oil and gas sector council investigation of labour demand issues into the next decade.
• address the issues of industry human resource planning and skill development by partnering with sector councils and industry associations	A tripartite memorandum of understanding between the province, Human Resources Development Canada, and the Association of Industry Sector Councils and terms of reference have been drafted. They are expected to be signed in summer 2003.

Activities	Achievements to Date
• engage stakeholders in an Energy Sector Skills Forum as outlined in *Nova Scotia's Energy Strategy: Seizing the Opportunity 2001*	The planning for the forum is under way. A co-op summer student has been employed to assist in preparations for this event, which is scheduled for November 2003.
• develop and implement an effective human resource strategy to attract and retain financial specialists to meet emerging skill needs of the Nova Scotia public service	Phase 1 of the human resource strategy for the financial community is on schedule. To date the strategy has defined the financial community and identified skills gaps and training needs. A final report with human resource priorities was completed in April 2003.

Objective 3

Work to enhance and improve the apprenticeship system in Nova Scotia

The new Apprenticeship Act is a sign of good things to come and demonstrates that both government and industry are committed to improving apprenticeship in Nova Scotia. Within the legislation there exists an ability to establish a youth apprenticeship program and offer skills enhancement training to journeypersons. Combined with more sections of training for apprentices, we are now moving towards a comprehensive approach to skill shortages in the province.

Stephen Vaslet,
Chair of the Provincial Apprenticehip Board

Activities	Achievements to Date
• reviewing the apprenticeship system and legislation through a consultative process involving numerous stakeholders including the human resource sector councils, Construction Association of Nova Scotia, Mainland Nova Scotia Building and Construction Trades Council, and Cape Breton Island Building and Construction Trades Council, leading to legislative revisions and system enhancements that are consistent with and responsive to business, labour, and apprentices' needs	A discussion paper was released and province-wide public consultations were held in spring 2002. A consultation feedback report was prepared in August 2002. An industry-led consultation report and recommendations were released in December 2002. A new draft of the *Apprenticeship and Trades Qualifications Act* was completed March 2003. The act was passed in May 2003.

Activities	Achievements to Date
• initiating a process to – develop a five-year strategic plan for apprenticeship training delivery and program development in Nova Scotia – examine the advisory function of the Provincial Apprenticeship Board and its policies concerning trade advisory committees – investigate the sourcing and supply of resources in the development and delivery of apprenticeship programming – review the compulsory certification designation policy for the purpose of developing consistent application among the designated trades	A draft five-year Apprenticeship Business Plan was prepared in August 2002. A Provincial Apprenticeship Board ad hoc advisory committee policy was developed and adopted in September 2002. A review of the apprenticeship fee structure and development of a new fee schedule for cabinet consideration was completed in January 2003. The new apprenticeship fees are expected to be phased in during 2003–2004. A review of the Sprinkler System Installer compulsory certification application was completed by the Provincial Apprenticeship Board in March 2003. This review forms the basis for an in-depth board review of compulsory certification in 2003–2004.
• work towards a credit recognition agreement between post-secondary institutions and the Apprenticeship Training Program	An articulation agreement has been completed and will be reviewed annually.
• pilot an Apprenticeship Essential Skills Initiative to identify an apprentice's essential skills needs and to develop individualized learning plans	This initiative led to the development of an individualized learning plan process for apprentices. The process includes the development of comprehensive essential skills reading, writing, math, and science assessments and customized education programs designed to provide apprentices with the essential skills needed to be successful in their apprenticeship training. The learning plan process was piloted with ironworker, carpenter, industrial mechanic, painter/decorator, and electrician apprentices.

	Activities	Achievements to Date
	• articulate the learning acquired through the Apprenticeship Training Program to be recognized for the purposes of the Nova Scotia High School Graduation Diploma for Adults	An articulation agreement that awards credits towards the Nova Scotia High School Graduation Diploma for Adults to individuals with an Apprenticeship Certificate of Completion has been created.
Objective 4 Improve mobility of skilled workers within Canada	**Activities**	**Achievements to Date**
	• implementing the Labour Mobility Chapter of Agreement on Internal Trade to reduce or remove barriers to the movement of workers within Canada, making it easier for skilled workers to choose where to live and work	Only one occupation in the province continues to maintain a residency requirement as a condition of licensure. Removal of this requirement is expected in fall 2003. Successful implementation of the chapter has also been demonstrated by the absence of any new formal complaints from workers in Nova Scotia or workers moving to Nova Scotia and looking to be recognized.
	• enhancing the National Interprovincial Standards Red Seal Program for the trades, in partnership with the private sector	Nova Scotia's participation in the Red Seal program remains strong. The Interprovincial Computerized Examination Management System (ICEMS) was made operational with the completion of 17 new interprovincial exam item banks since June 2002. Nova Scotia industry representatives participated in nine National Occupational Analysis workshops.
	• encourage regulatory bodies to recognize workers who have obtained their qualifications in other countries	Two papers regarding foreign credential recognition and the Quebec model of training and credential recognition have been developed. Recommendations supported in these papers encourage regulatory bodies to become familiar with the system of credential recognition in Quebec as well as to develop specific clauses in mutual recognition agreements respecting foreign credential recognition. These papers are currently being reviewed by senior government officials.

Objective 5	Activities	Achievements to Date
Improve Nova Scotia's competitive edge in attracting and retaining highly skilled international workers	• attracting and retaining business immigrants and investors to the province through Nova Scotia's economic immigration programs	The Nova Scotia Provincial Nominee Program was signed in August 2002. Provincial representatives attended Emigrate 2003 to market Nova Scotia's Provincial Nominee Program. There were over 22,000 attendees at this event in Europe.
	• attracting and retaining highly qualified international post-secondary education students to study in Nova Scotia through the International Marketing Program	Statistics submitted by Nova Scotia universities to the Association of Atlantic Universities indicate that enrolment of visa (international) students has risen by 25.3 percent over the previous academic year. This is the highest enrolment of international students among Atlantic Canada's provinces.
	• explore policy and program responses to facilitate the recognition of credentials and skills for internationally trained individuals living in Nova Scotia	Under the Canada/Nova Scotia Skills and Learning Framework, immigration has been identified as a priority for joint planning and work. Six activities have been identified for action, including advancing a service to recognize international credentials, qualifications, and experience.
	• develop a pilot project for immigrants who wish to make the transition into post-secondary education, to provide the required English as a Second Language (ESL) programs for academic purposes	A partnership with Nova Scotia Community College, Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association, Halifax Immigrant Learning Centre, and other settlement service providers was created to deliver an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) Pilot program. Two sessions were offered. Fourteen students enrolled in the first session and 15 in the second session.
	• explore opportunities under the Provincial Nominee Program to address skill shortages	Provincial representatives met with regional stakeholders including regional development authorities to assess rural skills needs and potential shortages and initiated a labour market inventory of information products to help assess skills gaps.

Activities	Achievements to Date
• develop a working partnership between Apprenticeship Training and the Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association (MISA) for the purpose of assessing and recognizing immigrant credentials related to apprenticeable trades	A process to co-operate on the integration of foreign workers in Nova Scotia has been created, and a joint proposal to hire staff to create a database of willing employers is being developed.
• retain a greater proportion of those international students studying at Nova Scotia's post-secondary institutions	A meeting was set in early May 2003 with the Advisory Committee on International Students and Immigration to discuss options for retaining international students post-graduation.

Objective 6

Design and implement labour policy to promote safe and healthy work environments, fair employment standards, and stable labour-management relations

Activities	Achievements to Date
• consulting with stakeholders and the public to achieve best practices in regulatory management to ensure a fair and safe workplace	A regulation review process for occupational health and safety (OHS) has been established and implemented. Consultations on a regulatory management program will continue across the Department of Environment and Labour.
• encouraging industry-specific training, which has proven to be a successful way to reduce accident rates, through partnering with safety associations and labour in the construction, retail gasoline, trucking, and forestry industries to deliver training to employers and employees	The existing partnership has been maintained as the Department of Environment and Labour migrates the accident prevention and promotion services to the Workers' Compensation Board in response to *The Nova Scotia Workers' Compensation Program: A Focused Review into the Workers' Compensation Act (Dorsey Report)*.
• supporting the Safe Communities Foundation, which aims to mobilize the resources of communities to deal with all aspects of health and safety	Staff resources were assigned to assist with the initiative as permitted. A regional co-ordinator position was funded for six months.
• developing a core health and safety curriculum for high school students prior to entering the job market to try to reduce accidents among younger workers	A core curriculum for grade 11 was introduced to the school system in the fall of 2002. It is available to all Nova Scotia high schools.

Workplace Health and Safety 11 helped me to identify workplace hazards and gave me the proper training for many workplace situations and emergencies. It was a good course.

Tom Curry, Grade 11 student attending Dr. John Hugh Gillis Regional High School in Antigonish

Activities	Achievements to Date
• making first aid courses available to high school students to increase the number of people trained in first aid in Nova Scotia	The school board first aid program has been implemented by St. John Ambulance.
• preparing various safety-related publications including *Standards of Practice for Farm Safety in Nova Scotia*, *The Forest Professional*, and Workplace Hazard Material Information System booklets	Work is underway on a booklet for the fisheries sector. Hazard sheets are prepared on an ongoing basis as required. Nova Scotia firms have access to these sheets, which are available at <http://www.gov.ns.ca> and from the Occupational Health and Safety Division of the Department of Environment and Labour.
• working with the Canadian Society of Safety Engineering on Project Minerva, which is an initiative focussed on providing health and safety education in universities	This program is established at two universities in the province, Dalhousie University (DalTech) and Saint Mary's University.
• develop a strategy to undertake a review of the Nova Scotia Labour Standards Code	Initial steps have been taken on this project and work on it will be ongoing.
• strengthen processes to support future development of a risk-based model for delivery of occupational health and safety inspection, monitoring, and compliance services	An inspection system based on accident experience has been implemented; research on risk-based models for delivery of inspection services has been conducted; and improvements in accident-based data from the Workers' Compensation Board have been introduced. A software change to the inspection tracking system has also been introduced.
• increase activities in the prevention of occupational health and safety accidents and injury, the importance of which was identified in the province's response to *The Nova Scotia Workers' Compensation Program: A Focused Review*	The development of a strategic plan for the implementation of the workplace safety and insurance system with the Workers' Compensation Board, Workers' Advisers Program, and the Workers' Compensation Appeal Tribunal is under way. Work has also begun on the definition of a provincial strategy for occupational health and safety with the Workers' Compensation Board and Human Resources Development Canada.

Activities	Achievements to Date
• disseminate relevant safety information to the fishing industry	Currently, a marine safety good-practice document is being developed in conjunction with the Nova Scotia Fisheries Sector Council and Transport Canada, and inspection and investigation resources in the industry are being maintained.
• promote youth health and safety as part of a national initiative agreed to by labour ministries from all Canadian jurisdictions	A Youth Occupational Health and Safety home page with links to national and international youth resources has been established. A series of promotion items directed at youth have been developed. Initiatives directed at youth at work have been funded, including – the Student Workplace Orientation Program offered by the Nova Scotia Safety Council in the summer – a one day workshop with the Nova Scotia Safety Council at their annual conference on youth health and safety – a delegate's participation at the Cross Canada Young Workers' Advisory Committee Provincial representatives participated in the inter-jurisdictional committee on youth health and safety sponsored by the Canadian Association of Administrators of Labour Legislation, Occupational Safety and Health and Association of Workers' Compensation Boards of Canada.
• partner with the Atlantic Centre of Excellence for Women's Health to investigate the relationship between women's health and well-being, family life, and earning a livelihood through the Healthy Balance Research Program	The Healthy Balance research program is under way; the first phase has been completed, and preliminary results, with policy implications, will be published next winter.

Objective 7	Activities	Achievements to Date
Improve opportunities for youth to develop the leadership skills required for successful labour market participation	• adopting a youth engagement strategy prepared by the HeartWood organization for Rural Team Nova Scotia	The Rural Youth Engagement Strategy has been adopted by Rural Team Nova Scotia. The Rural Secretariat and Nova Scotia Youth Services Division are jointly funding an asset mapping process as the first phase of implementation.
	• implementing the Canada/Nova Scotia Protocol on Youth Employment with the Federal-Provincial Youth Committee	The implementation of the youth protocol is ongoing.
	• building on principles of youth capacity for leadership and community development such as the Nova Scotia Youth Conservation Corps, HeartWood, YouthLIVE, and the Centre for Entrepreneurship Education and Development	Negotiations involving the Nova Scotia Youth Services Division, other government departments, and Human Resources Development Canada to establish the Centre of Excellence for Youth Development are under way.
	• analyse and nurture best practices in the youth leadership and development field	The Centre of Excellence for Youth Development will provide a focal point for government-community collaboration around youth leadership development.
	• consult with community and government representatives to identify approaches to support youth leadership development and increase the opportunities available to youth	The asset-mapping process and the establishment of the Centre of Excellence for Youth Development will identify approaches and opportunities to support youth leadership.
	• explore policy and program options to support growth in this sector	The discussions around the Centre of Excellence for Youth Development are providing the forum to explore policy and program options.

Goal 2: Provide better labour market access and supports to Nova Scotians

Objective 1	Activities	Achievements to Date
Provide career- and employment-related services to Nova Scotians to help them develop their skills and find sustainable jobs	• offering career and job development services to income assistance recipients who are assessed as having the ability to participate in activities that improve their employability	As of December 2002, Employment Support Services (ESS) staff provided counselling and job development services to approximately 10,311 participants. There were 1,401 individuals involved in academic upgrading and 3,114 individuals involved in skills training. This period also saw 2,550 employment starts.
	• creating and implementing a professional development strategy to ensure that proper student assessment and referral practices are in place to enable adults to acquire the skills and credentials they need through the Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning	A number of professional development sessions covering intake assessment and referral procedures were held with the student services staff from Nova Scotia Community College and staff from the Department of Community Services. These sessions were designed to ensure that students including income assistance recipients were appropriately placed in the Adult Learning Program and able to access the supports available through the Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning.
	• providing recent post-secondary graduates with an opportunity to work with the Government of Nova Scotia and gain valuable experience for up to one year through a Career Starts Internship Program	Sixteen students were hired to work in internships that lasted for 49 weeks. A survey of participating interns indicated that 92 percent of them feel that the program provided them with good practical work experience. Ninety-two percent of the interns also indicated that they were satisfied or very satisfied overall with the Career Starts Program.
	• providing meaningful and applicable employment opportunities with the Government of Nova Scotia to post-secondary co-op students through the co-operative Employment Program	Each year the government hires 40 to 45 co-operative students.

Activities	Achievements to Date
• creating employment opportunities for Aboriginal students, racially visible students, students with disabilities, and female students pursuing studies in non-traditional areas through a Summer Employment Diversity Initiative and a Mentorship Program for females	The government continues to hire and recruit students from the designated groups. In 2002, 12 students were hired through the Summer Employment Diversity Initiative. In 2002, 11 female students were provided mentorship opportunities.
• providing business start-up information to aspiring and existing entrepreneurs	The province-wide network of Open for Business offices provided information to over 25,000 individuals.
• initiate a service-mapping project that will inventory current career development and employment services provided to Nova Scotians, identify gaps in service, and provide the foundation for a comprehensive career and employment strategy	Employability and career development have been identified a priority under the Canada/Nova Scotia Skills and Learning Framework. A federal/ provincial team will oversee the service-mapping project in 2003–2004 to ensure a co-ordinated continuum of career- and life-planning programs and services is available to Nova Scotians.
• develop the concept of a single-entry delivery access point for career advice for Nova Scotians	The service-mapping project described above will provide the information and direction required to develop a delivery model for career and life planning programs and services.
• provide education and training, career development, and employment information to youth through the Youth Services Division Web site	This has been accomplished by continuously adding and updating relevant links and information pertinent to the development of Nova Scotian youth.
• support the continuation of Career Pathways from secondary schools to post-secondary education and feature employment by supporting the CollegePrep initiatives as outlined in the memorandums of understanding between school boards and Nova Scotia Community College	Several articulation agreements with Nova Scotia Community College are being finalized, and support was provided to develop initiatives in the Annapolis Valley Regional School Board and Chignecto-Central Regional School Board.

We have used other services but found Open for Business to provide the most up to date, easy to understand, and most relevant instructional information to what the real business world is today.

G. Bruce Meloney
The Shoe Tree

Not only has your organization provided a practical presentation on business planning, but your organization also provides hope and direction for the young people of Cape Breton.

Joe Chisholm
Department Head
Social Studies
Riverview High School

Objective 2	Activities	Achievements to Date
Assist low-income Nova Scotians, including income assistance recipients, to access education and training	• developing work transition programs in areas of labour market demand and ensuring that there is a match between skills required and the needs of industry (for example, income assistance recipients who successfully completed essential skills education programs in the hotel industry are gaining employment in entry-level positions)	An essential skills education program for eight income assistance recipients was piloted at the Casino Nova Scotia Hotel. Five have remained off assistance and are employed either at the casino, hotel, or elsewhere. A new partnership with Centennial Group of Hotels is currently running a program with eight income assistance recipients who will enter jobs upon successful completion.
	• providing eligible recipients of income assistance with sponsorship, in the form of full tuition, books, and fees, to attend one- and two-year core programs at Nova Scotia Community College in order to gain the educational and technical skills necessary to enter the competitive labour market through the Equity Opportunities Program	The Educate to Work program (formerly the Equity Opportunities Program) provided opportunities for 289 students through programs at Nova Scotia Community College and Université Sainte-Anne–Collège de l'Acadie.
	• explore options for a new debt-relief program that will reduce student loan debt for students with the highest need	A new debt-reduction program was announced in the 2003–2004 budget, April 2003.

'Susan' had been working for most of her life until her divorce, when she decided to stay home to look after her kids. Nine years later, she decided to return to work but found it difficult to get a job. That was until she learned about the Work Force Development Project. 'Susan' was selected as a candidate for a joint initiative with Sheraton Hotels and following a six-week course, she began work as a trainee at the hotel. The experience helped her to regain her self-confidence and has taught her children important lessons about reaching personal goals.

Former Participant of the Work Force Development Project

Objective 3	Activities	Achievements to Date
Promote equity, fairness, and diversity throughout labour market programs and services offered in Nova Scotia	• developing and implementing a recruitment initiative targeted at students with disabilities in the public education system to improve access to Nova Scotia Community College and Nova Scotia universities	During the first week of April 2003, Rehabilitation Programs and Services staff provided in-service training to guidance counselling and resource staff at every high school in the province on programs, goods, and services that support students with disabilities in post-secondary training.

Activities	Achievements to Date
• developing and implementing an approach to meeting the exceptional needs of individual program plan students from the public education system when they attend Nova Scotia Community College skills training programs	Rehabilitation Programs and Services, in partnership with Nova Scotia Community College, developed and implemented a Special Admissions Process program for individual program plan students wishing to attend Nova Scotia Community College skills training programs. Approximately 40 students were involved in the pilot, province-wide, with all students mainstreamed in skills training programs.
• developing and marketing memorandums of understanding with Nova Scotia Community College and all universities in the province, with the goal of establishing a common provincial standard for goods and services delivery for any student with a disability attending post-secondary training; and a common special needs policy for all post-secondary training institutes	Memorandums of understanding were signed with all universities and Nova Scotia Community College. A policy group called The Round Table was formed, with representatives from all post-secondary institutions. The group meets regularly to support the agenda of a common special needs policy and common goods and services for students with disabilities in post-secondary training. A researcher has been recruited for educational, program evaluation, and research efforts that reflect the need for informed decision making.
• providing an Education Incentive Program for African Nova Scotian students to assist and encourage their continued participation in community colleges, technical institutes, universities, and other approved post-secondary institutions	Approximately 30 students were awarded grants of $1,000 each for their post-secondary studies. African Canadian Studies 11, Gaelic Studies 11, and Mi'kmaq Studies 10 were implemented as credits for the Canadian history requirement.
• continuing to support the Black Business Initiative's Business is Jammin' program to encourage youth entrepreneurship	The Black Business Initiative's Business is Jammin' program provided access to Break into Business Camps and province-wide entrepreneurship awareness activities with the help of a $500,000 investment by the province.

I'm so glad that I came to NSCC. The instructors and tutors have helped me learn and do things I never thought I'd be able to do. It is so important for people with disabilities to have resources like tutors, and technology like computers and dictaphones. I got 100 percent on a test this year for the first time in my life! The supports I've received made that possible. For me, college has been a family environment ... everyone here gave me wings and taught me to fly. I said to my Mom, wow, first high school, and now college! I can't tell you how happy that makes me.

William Gilkie
2003 Graduate
Cooking Certificate Program
NSCC, Institute of Technology Campus

Activities	Achievements to Date
• promoting women's education, training, and labour market activity, such as support for Techsploration, Hypatia, Association of Nova Scotian Women for Education and Research in Science, Women's Community Economic Development Network (CED), especially in fields where they are under-represented	Through the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women, support and advice were provided to the Techsploration Steering Committee and the Program Expansion Committee. Techsploration is currently limited to eight schools in the province; expansion of Techsploration will provide opportunities for young women across Nova Scotia to explore careers in science and trades. Advice and support were also provided to Hypatia and the Women's CED Network for a successful joint application to Status of Women Canada to conduct research to identify policy gaps, overlaps, and conflicts affecting rural women's participation in the new economy. The Women's CED Network also received support and advice in the development of their projects such as the Equality in Technology (ET) project which promotes the recruitment and retention of women in science and technology programs at Nova Scotia Community College's Annapolis Valley campuses and in the workplace. It will also provide research for the creation of a new model to improve women's access to science and technology programs and workplaces.
• recruiting and referring qualified designated group applications for employment competitions	The Public Service Commission has created an inventory of 300 clients qualified for over 20 occupations. Clients are referred to competitions posted on the Employment Opportunities Bulletin. Departments are encouraged to use the inventory to obtain qualified employees for short-term placements.
• providing individual employment counselling to designated group applicants and government employees	The Public Service Commission continues to meet regularly with clients to review resumés and career options within the Nova Scotia government.

Activities	Achievements to Date
• making presentations and conducting workshops on employment opportunities and job search techniques to community organizations	The Public Service Commission continues to meet regularly with community organizations. In 2002, staff from the commission attended two job fairs, providing information on job search techniques.
• conducting workshops and seminars for managers in the civil service to create awareness of both diversity management and the nature of the affirmative action policy, and their role in implementation	Approximately 75 percent of Government of Nova Scotia employees have participated in the Diversity Management Program.
• reviewing employment policies and practices to ensure that any barriers to employment or advancement of persons from designated groups are eliminated	The Public Service Commission continues to review employment policies and practices.
• ensuring that fair hiring practices are followed when filling positions within the Government of Nova Scotia through implementation of a Fair Hiring Policy	The Public Service Commission continues to ensure that all client departments are aware of their responsibilities and adhere to the principles of the Fair Hiring Policy.
• providing a workplace that is free from discrimination and promotes equality of opportunity to all persons accessing employment positions within the Government of Nova Scotia through implementation of an affirmative action policy	The Public Service Commission continues to provide client departments and employees with support and advice through administration of the Affirmative Action Policy.
• recognizing the right of Government of Nova Scotia employees to work in an environment free from sexual harassment and any harassment based on the protected characteristics set out in the *Nova Scotia Human Rights Act* through implementing a sexual harassment and no discrimination policy	The Public Service Commission continues to provide client departments and employees with support and advice with regards to the Sexual Harassment and No Discrimination Policy and to ensure that the policy is administered effectively.

Activities	Achievements to Date
• prohibiting discrimination against Government of Nova Scotia employees, clients, or job applicants living with or affected by HIV or AIDS through implementation of a HIV/AIDS in the workplace policy	The Public Service Commission continues to provide client departments and employees with support and advice through administration of the HIV/AIDS in the workplace policy.
• ensuring that reasonable steps are taken to provide services to persons who are deaf and hard of hearing in a fair and non-discriminatory manner through the provision of interpreter services and implementing a government sign language interpreter services policy	Government renewed a service agreement with the Society of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Nova Scotians to ensure the availability of services.
• extend the memorandum of understanding framework between Nova Scotia Community College and regional school boards to include First Nations' schools to support student success in post-secondary education	The memorandums of understanding between Nova Scotia Community College and each of the four First Nations school boards were signed on March 6, 2003.
• establish an intergovernmental/ interdepartmental and community-based Round Table on Women's Economic Security to identify and jointly work on issues affecting women's access to labour market programs and services	A Round Table on Women's Economic Security was established. It is chaired by the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women and has representation from federal and provincial government departments and community stakeholders. It identified issues, policies, and programs affecting the economic security of low income women. Strategies to address these are in the planning stages.

Objective 4	Activities	Achievements to Date
Develop and implement prior-learning assessment and recognition processes and tools	• recognizing work experiences and technical training through Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) for the purpose of determining eligibility to write trade certification exams	A draft PLAR policy has been developed. It is subject to legal interpretation and final approval.
	• supporting the development of additional articulation agreements between post-secondary institutions whereby credits earned at one institution are recognized by another	The Nova Scotia Advisory Board on Colleges and Universities discussion paper raises this issue. The paper is currently under consideration by the Minister of Education and the Council of Nova Scotia University Presidents.
'Ann' suffers from a panic disorder that makes it difficult to be in most social situations. The PLAR program gave her the knowledge and confidence she needed to experience life to its fullest. She now has a portfolio full of tangible proof of her accomplishments and is eager to continue the learning process throughout her life. **Former Participant of Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) Course**	• implementing policies through the Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning that recognize prior learning to fulfil some of the requirements of the Nova Scotia High School Graduation Diploma for Adults	Agreements were made between the Department of Education and Nova Scotia Community College to ensure that certain post-secondary credits are recognized as elective credits toward the Nova Scotia High School Graduation Diploma for Adults.
	• develop a credential assessment service to assess formal education of individuals educated in other countries who seek access to Nova Scotian post-secondary institutions or the labour market	In partnership with the Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association and Human Resources Development Canada, a study has been initiated to determine the most effective way to address the need for a credential assessment service, to assess the formal education of individuals educated in other countries who seek access to Nova Scotia post-secondary institutions or the labour market. A report is expected in late spring 2003.

Goal 3: Strengthen Nova Scotia's system of lifelong learning opportunities

Objective 1	Activities	Achievements to Date
Increase the opportunities for Nova Scotia's children to develop a curiosity for and ability to learn before entering Nova Scotia's education system	• supporting parents and caregivers as their children's first and most important teachers with Read to Me!, a province-wide initiative to give every newborn in the province a gift bag containing educational resources for the parents including age- and culturally-appropriate books	Approximately 4,000 newborns benefited from this initiative, which was implemented at the IWK, Western Regional Health Centre, and Cape Breton Regional Health Centre and launched at St. Martha's Hospital, in Antigonish, on June 18, 2003.
	• supporting the Family Literacy Initiative Endowment Fund, which provides grants to non-profit organizations to carry out family literacy projects in the province	Eight family literacy projects were funded across Nova Scotia for a total of $100,000 through a partnership with the Halifax Youth Foundation.
	• developing a comprehensive system of Early Childhood Development (ECD) in partnership with the federal government, which includes enhanced home visiting, quality child care, supports for children with special needs, parent education and support, and a variety of training strategies	Program grants have been distributed, and there are new opportunities for child-care retention and training. Child care wages have been enhanced. There are more opportunities for supported child care for children with special needs. Planning for enhanced home visits has been ongoing and is ready to move toward implementation.
	• supporting story times and programs for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers where children and parents are introduced to age-appropriate books and children develop a love of reading and books and gain socialization skills	Infant and toddler story times are available in libraries in Cape Breton, Yarmouth, and Halifax. Preschool story times are held in most public library branches in the province.

Our son Daniel was born in July 2002 and we received a Read to Me! package at the IWK. We have been reading to him on a daily basis since he was two months old and he has always listened and watched intently. He has even been known to squeal with delight at the opening of a book! His favorite book from the Read to Me! package is "Twinkle Twinkle." Thank you so much for providing this invaluable program!

New Mother
IWK Health Centre

Objective 2	Activities	Achievements to Date
Improve the core skills of children in Nova Scotia's education system	• initiating Writers in Action, to improve grammar, usage, spelling, and punctuation	*Writers in Action 4* was implemented, and more than 10,000 *Writers in Action Handbooks* were provided to every grade 4 student and grades 4–6 teachers, and more than 10,000 dictionaries and more than 10,000 thesauri were provided for grades 4–6 classrooms.
	• making early reading and writing the first priority by expanding early intervention programs, adding 700,000 books in grades primary to 7, and providing intensive, ongoing professional development	This is an ongoing activity. An additional $1,075,000 was provided for resources for grades primary–3, and $304,000 for resources for grades 4–6. Professional development was provided for P–6 principals and for each school's literacy lead teacher. A total of 15 regional workshops for 670 participants were held. There was a professional development workshop for 93 teacher leaders of grades primary to 3. New funding for expansion of Reading Recovery was announced.
	• increasing the amount of daily, uninterrupted time students spend on math, reading, and writing	The new guidelines were implemented for grades primary to 6 with minimum requirements for language arts and mathematics.
	• developing resources designed to enhance the French language skills of children enrolled in the Acadian education system who may have limited exposure to French at home	The development of a *francisation* kit is part of a national project and is in the final stage. The kit will be made available to all Conseil scolaire acadien provincial schools in September 2003 along with teacher training.
	• supporting Techsploration, which introduces junior high school girls to scientific, technical, and trades work	Program support grants were provided to this initiative, which provides opportunities for young women across Nova Scotia to explore careers in science and trades.

Activities	Achievements to Date
• allowing students to discover the personal qualities, values, and attitudes of entrepreneurs through curriculum at all grade levels to learn specific knowledge and practically apply it in the creation of a venture	The entrepreneurship curriculum continues to be implemented in schools province-wide. Over 1,500 students are currently enrolled in Entrepreneurship 12.
• implement a comprehensive math strategy that will add new programs for struggling and advanced students; provide mathematics teacher leaders in every school; increase opportunities for teacher training/professional development; provide resources for teachers, students, and parents; and provide a framework for increased accountability for student learning and achievement	Thirty-four training and professional development workshops were provided for 880 school-based math leaders; $555,600 in targeted funding was provided to boards for board-level math leaders; and 10 grade-level specific teaching resources were developed. Mathematics summer institutes for 233 teachers were provided as well as $1,052,000 for additional resources. Mathematics 10 Plus pilots are ongoing.
• measure student achievement through literacy and mathematics testing at grades 6, 9, and 12	Literacy assessments are being developed for grades 6, 9, and 12. Development work including field testing was conducted in 2002–2003 for the Elementary Literacy Assessment scheduled for implementation in October 2003. Planning is underway for a Junior High Literacy Assessment for grade 9. At the grade 12 level Nova Scotia Examinations (NSE) are administered each January and June in English 12 and English/ Communications 12. Exam results count for 30 percent of students' final course marks. In mathematics, program assessments are administered in grade 5 and grade 8 (2002). The purpose of the assessments is to determine the implementation of the new mathematics program. These assessments will be moved to grade 6 and grade 9 beginning in 2005. NSE in Mathematics 12 and Advanced Mathematics 12 were in development during 2002–2003 and will be administered in the next school year. All results for provincial, national, and international assessments are reported annually in the *Minister's Report to Parents*.

Activities	Achievements to Date
• complete the implementation of new Atlantic Canada science curriculum for grades P–12, including the provision of equipment and other resources required for hands-on science learning	The Atlantic Canada science curriculum grades primary and 1 has been implemented and $400,000 was provided for learning resources.
• launch French first-language resources for teachers and parents	A series of four booklets was distributed in all Conseil scolaire acadien provincial schools at the beginning of the 2002–2003 school year.
• review and revise career education components in elementary, junior high, and senior high curricula to include Career Portfolio	This activity has been completed.
• plan pilot, resourcing, and professional development for implementation of Career Portfolio in grade 7	This activity has been completed.
• monitor and continue to support the senior high portfolio project under way in partnership with Annapolis Valley Regional School Board, South Shore District School Board, and Nova Scotia Community College	This activity has been completed.

Objective 3	Activities	Achievements to Date
Expand co-operative and work experience opportunities for students in Nova Scotia's secondary education system	• encouraging young people to consider entrepreneurship as a viable employment opportunity through the Youth Entrepreneurship Scholarships (YES) Program	Twenty-seven Nova Scotia students won more than $24,000 in post-secondary scholarships for operating 21 businesses across the province last summer.
	• providing significant opportunities under the Community Access Program (C@P) for students to access entry-level work place opportunities throughout Nova Scotia	One hundred and sixty-five youth gained valuable information, and technology-related employment experience, while working at 200 community-based C@P sites across Nova Scotia.
	• continuing to support the development of entrepreneurial skill-based co-op programs	The Entrepreneurial Skills Program was expanded to three universities with the addition of Mount Saint Vincent University.
	• continuing to support co-operative employment placements in not-for-profit organizations	A total of 235 co-operative education positions with not-for-profit organizations were funded.
	• work with education, industry, business partners, and sector councils to establish a Youth Apprenticeship Program and expand co-operative education and other community-based education programs to provide more high school students with experience in the workplace	The Apprenticeship Training Division is engaged with Human Resources Development Canada, the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, and public school partners to develop a youth apprenticeship model in Nova Scotia. Best-practices research was completed December 2002, and a steering committee and work group were established January–February 2003. A feasibility analysis was undertaken with the Software Human Resource Sector Council to determine the necessity and fit for an IT secondary school apprenticeship program in Nova Scotia.
	• develop, pilot, and implement new courses that focus on labour market needs and opportunities, including interactive technology courses	Business Management 12 and Film and Video Production 12 have been implemented.

	Activities	Achievements to Date
	• develop articulation agreements for a range of senior high courses and Nova Scotia Community College programs	Articulation agreements are in various stages of development, and they will change as Nova Scotia Community College programs continue to evolve.
	• monitor and support school board and NSCC CollegePrep initiatives	Support for career portfolio projects in high schools has expanded. Nineteen summer institutes were offered in partnership with Nova Scotia Community College.
Objective 4 Increase the opportunities for Nova Scotians to access adult basic education	**Activities**	**Achievements to Date**
	• enhancing the relevance and accessibility of adult-centred programs ranging from basic literacy to the High School Graduation Diploma for Adults using the Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning as the co-ordinating mechanism	The Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning (NSSAL) worked in partnership with Nova Scotia Community College, Université Sainte-Anne–Collège de l'Acadie, school board adult high schools, and community-based organizations to deliver program to over 3,700 Nova Scotians from September 2001 to June 2002. Of those, 150 were the first to receive the new High School Diploma for Adults. Statistics for the 2002–2003 academic year are still being compiled, but as of February 2003, over 4,000 adults were enrolled, with final totals still to come.
	• delivering short-term programs such as the Woodlot Management Home Study Program which provides woodlot owners with the skills required to help them better manage their woodlots	The remaining series of modules were made available online, making the complete series now available online. This year more than 260 new students signed up to take one or more of the 1 online courses offered, and the numbe of students taking the course increases each month. Course modules include Forest Stewardship; Woodlot Ecology; Wood Utilization and Technology; Planning Roads and Trails Managing; and Woodlot Finances Part A: Planning an Investment and Part B: Income Tax an Estate Planning.

Activities	Achievements to Date
• implement a pilot literacy project to improve educational services for adults who are incarcerated or in conflict with the law	An Intake Assessment Tool for the correctional setting has been developed and piloted, and the Department of Education Tutor Training is being delivered to corrections officers as part of the Halifax Correctional Centre Justice Reintegration Project, which is funded by the National Literacy Secretariat (HRDC).
• develop resources to assist adult literacy organizations in serving the needs of seniors	The Cultivating Lifelong Learning Opportunities for Seniors project is preparing a Seniors Literacy Resource Kit. One hundred copies of the kit will be distributed to literacy co-ordinators and others across the province in the summer of 2003 and followed up with orientation sessions. A "Life-Long Learning Opportunities" section has been added to the *Programs for Seniors* directory. Sixty thousand copies of this publication were distributed province-wide in March 2003.

Objective 5

Make education and training more relevant to the emerging skill needs of the learners and employers

These experiences have had a tremendously positive impact on my life and have given me the drive to pursue a career in the Petroleum Industry.

Matthew Huestis (2001), Energy Training Program for Students

Activities	Achievements to Date
• partnering with employers and labour through the Workplace Education Initiative to develop customized essential skills programs for workers	A total of 110 workplace education essential skills programs have been delivered to approximately 1,200 people at 55 workplaces and adjustment centres across the province. In 2002–2003, an investment of approximately $380,000 leveraged an additional $380,000 from employers.
• establishing the Energy Training Program for Students to encourage the private sector to hire post-secondary students for summer and co-op work terms in the energy sector	Approximately 70 students were hired by 50 companies for co-op and summer positions directly related to their studies and the energy sector, resulting in roughly 48,000 person-hours of direct energy industry experience. In the last fiscal year, an investment of approximately $230,000 leveraged an additional $285,000 from energy sector employers.

Activities	Achievements to Date
• implementing the Nova Scotia Nursing Strategy, which provides funding for a co-operative learning experience for student nurses in the Dalhousie and Saint Francis Xavier nursing programs	Ninety nursing students spent the summer months between third and fourth years in co-op placements in clinical settings. The students were paid during these placements.
• reviewing and revising the Adult Learning Program curriculum so that it is more closely aligned with employability skills required for work	The curriculum review and revision process has begun. The employability skills are being integrated into new curriculum under development. A focus group, which is in the planning stage, will develop strategies to better link curriculum outcomes to employability skills and the needs of adult learners.
• enhance Nova Scotia Community College's interactions with industry in program and curriculum development	Nova Scotia Community College oversees Program Advisory Committees (PAC) for courses ranging from continuing care to heavy duty equipment repair, to ensure that curriculum and learning outcomes match the most current needs of industry. This industry involvement has been essential to the college's program renewal process, which has resulted in 50 percent of Nova Scotia Community College's programs changing over the past five years to meet industry demands for skilled labour. The Department of Energy has invested $500,000 to Nova Scotia Community College's Nautical Institute for the purchase of a dynamic positioning training simulator.
• work with industry and educational institutions to design and develop training programs that meet industry skills demands, e.g., the Offshore Operations Technician program at Nova Scotia Community College	The Offshore Operations Technician program, offered at Nova Scotia Community College's Marconi Campus, has started training its first students. This program was designed with the guidance of the petroleum industry and the Department of Energy.

Objective 6	Activities	Achievements to Date
Increase the post-secondary education and training system's capacity to respond to emerging labour market needs	• exploring the growth capacity of Nova Scotia Community College	The province made its single largest investment, a seven-year, $123-million expansion to the Nova Scotia Community College system. This investment will make room for an additional 2,500 students across the province. The expansion includes a new metro Halifax campus and major renovations and upgrades to 13 other campuses, with major projects in Port Hawkesbury, Kentville, Stellarton, and Truro.
	• providing network linkages to enhance the foundations of the digital economy and knowledge economy through the Information Economy Initiative, which includes providing enhanced high-speed access to university and community college Web sites	This initiative is under way.
	• expanding the baccalaureate nursing programs in Nova Scotia	Beginning in May 2003, 60 more nurses will be trained each year in Nova Scotia and 8 seats will be added to Dalhousie's medical school in the fall of 2003.
	• encouraging the continuation of university-based development centres that expose students and the community to entrepreneurship development activities and techniques	With assistance from the Atlantic Canada Co-operation Opportunities Agency (ACOA) five university-based development centres at Saint Mary's University, St. Francis Xavier University, Acadia, Mount Saint Vincent University, and Université Sainte-Anne–Collège de l'Acadie will continue to serve the university and business communities.
	• prepare business plan to address capacity requirements of apprenticeship to reach industry's expectations for training, delivery, and standards development	The Apprenticeship Training Division business plan was completed in August 2002, and a five-year growth strategy was identified in this plan.

Activities	Achievements to Date
• integrate programming through the merger of Université Sainte-Anne–Collège de l'Acadie to provide increased opportunities for French post-secondary education	The merger of the two institutions is complete, and program enhancement is expected over the next four years.
• support groups such as Hypatia in their work of improving the culture of educational institutions and workplaces to attract and retain women in science and trades and technology occupations	A successful joint application to Status of Women Canada by Hypatia and the Women's CED Network for the Changing Lanes Project was supported. This project will work with institutional partners to identify barriers and the change strategies required to foster a culture and environment that promotes the participation of girls and women in science and technology.
• create agricultural and aquacultural industrial research environments through partnerships with national and international academic institutions, other governments, and industry stakeholders	The Nova Scotia Agricultural College (NSAC) research environment includes – a Tier II Canada Research Chair in Agricultural Resource Management, – the Canadian Centre for Fur Animal Research – a research professorship in Tree Fruit Bio-Products Development Canada Foundation for Innovation grants to support infrastructure for poultry research with total value of $5.26 million from all sources Nova Scotia Agricultural College students are able to spend a semester studying abroad through student exchange agreements at post-secondary institutions in Jamaica, England, Norway, and Denmark.

Objective 7	Activities	Achievements to Date
Promote lifelong learning through the development of a learning culture	• supporting training opportunities in computer basics, software applications, and Internet use to help individuals upgrade their skills	There are a number computer training programs available in all public libraries, including self-directed online General Educational Development (GED) preparation available in Sydney.
	• co-ordinating the annual Summer Reading Program to develop a love of books and reading and to maintain children's reading skills over the summer months	Thirteen thousand children participated in the annual summer reading program held in Nova Scotia's public libraries. Sixteen children between the ages of 11 and 13 participated in a writing camp in New Glasgow. It is expected to be repeated in 2003.
	• providing rural residents with a level of access equivalent to that enjoyed by urban residents through the Virtual Library	The Virtual Library is available from every regional library Web site. Patrons can sign up for a library card, renew items, place holds, ask questions, and access on line full-text databases.
	• keeping pace with government's movement toward providing information and services online by supporting public libraries as key delivery points	A pilot business project in Pictou-Antigonish was launched on March 24, 2003. It provides access to federal and provincial online information regarding small business as well as information on print and human resources.
	• support use of *Web-4-All* computer software in public libraries to increase learning opportunities for people with disabilities, new adult readers, and new immigrants	There are *Web-4-All* pilots under way in Metegan and Liverpool.
	• encourage an interest in biology, archaeology, geology, palaeontology, culture, and heritage by providing a comprehensive schedule of Nova Scotia specific exhibits and interpretive programs through the Nova Scotia Museum	A regular program of exhibits, demonstrations, field work, and cultural and natural heritage is offered through 26 museum sites throughout the province.

Activities	Achievements to Date
• increase accessibility of provincial and community heritage resources and genealogy information available online through the Nova Scotia Museum and Public Archives to promote educational resources and opportunities for Nova Scotians	The publication *Museum Events* communicates museum information to schools, libraries, and the public in Nova Scotia to increase accessibility to programs and activities.
• promote the *Nova Scotia Skills Framework and 2002–2003 Action Plan*	This document was released and is available online through the Skills Nova Scotia link at <www.gov.ns.ca>.
• conduct public information sessions and presentations to encourage business and labour to invest in adult learning and skills training of their workforce	The preliminary planning for this activity is under way.
• showcase community and industry leadership through the provision of recognition events and awards	The Apprenticeship Training Division and Provincial Apprenticeship Board in co-operation with Nova Scotia Community College and University College of Cape Breton held the province's first three apprentice recognition events in Sydney (April 2002), Halifax (November 2002), and Stellarton (April 2003). Business and labour partners provided significant sponsorship to all events, which celebrated apprentices achieving their journeyperson certification.

Conclusion

The *Skills Nova Scotia Framework and 2002–2003 Action Plan* laid the foundation for the skills, supports, and systems necessary to develop a world-class workforce ready to meet the challenges of today and the promise of tomorrow. This report demonstrates that the hard work, co-operation, and resourcefulness of all the Skills Nova Scotia partners are responding to both the short- and long-term skill development needs of the labour market. Nova Scotians are responding to economic opportunities as they arise.

We have put the pieces in place to develop strategies and partnerships necessary to identify the labour market skill development needs on the horizon. The *Skills Nova Scotia 2002–2003 Action Plan* that will be released later this year will build on the work of the past year and ensure the development of a strong workforce and bright future.

If you would like additional copies of

Skills Nova Scotia Annual Progress Report 2002–2003

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